

## **Speaker Biographies**

### **Beetles, Bees, Butterflies: A Symposium on Vermont's Pollinators**

**Toby Alexander** is the State Biologist and acting Forester for the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Colchester, Vermont. He is responsible for habitat management and forestry related practice standards, Farm Bill programs and providing technical information to field staff and partners.

**Mark Ferguson** is the Natural Heritage Zoologist with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. His work focuses on invertebrates, fishes, and amphibians, particularly rare, threatened, and endangered species.

**Jarrold Fowler** is the Pollinator Conservation and Conservation Biological Control Specialist for New England and Northeast Regions at The Xerces Society and a Technical Service Provider at USDA-NRCS. He is proficient in science-based and sustainable insect habitat assessment, design, installation, maintenance, and monitoring.

**Cary Giguere** is the Chair of the State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group that regularly meet EPA on pesticide topics. Cary also represents the Agency of Agriculture on the Vermont Pesticide Advisory Council.

**Vern Grubinger** has been working with farmers for 30 years. He is the vegetable and berry specialist and Extension Professor with the University of Vermont, and coordinator of USDA's Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE), which awards \$4 million annually in grants to researchers, educators and farmers across the 12 Northeast states.

**John Hayden**, along with his wife Nancy, runs The Farm Between, an organic fruit farm and fruit nursery in Jeffersonville, VT. John has an M.S. degree in entomology and a passion for ecological agriculture. He has been an educator, farmer and consultant for over 35 years. His farm is designed as a pollinator sanctuary with season-long floral resources, nesting habitat and a no-pesticide approach to fruit farming.

**Rick Keigwin** serves as the Deputy Director for Programs within EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. Rick joined EPA in 1990, and has been in his current position since January 2016. Rick has held leadership positions in the Pesticide Re-evaluation Division, the Biological and Economic Analysis Division, and the Registration Division. He also serves as the staff level co-chair of the Pollinator Health Task Force, established by President Obama in June 2014.

**Deborah Markowitz** is the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the state agency with primary responsibility for protecting Vermont's environment, natural resources and wildlife and for maintaining Vermont's forests and state parks. Previously, she served as Secretary of State from 1999 until 2011.

**Kent McFarland** is a co-founder of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies as well as a conservation biologist, photographer, writer and naturalists with over 20 years of experience across the Americas. He's co-host of Outdoor Radio, a monthly natural history series on Vermont Public Radio. Find him on Twitter @KPMcFarland.

**Charlie Nicholson** is a PhD Student at UVM's Gund Institute for Ecological Economics. He is studying how landscape pattern and farm management affect the benefits Vermont blueberry growers receive from native bees.

Representative **Carolyn Partridge**, Dem-Windham, is a self-employed farmer and seamstress. A member of numerous community and governmental boards and commissions, Rep. Partridge co-chairs the Northeast States Association for Agricultural Stewardship and is Chair of the House Agriculture and Forest Products Committee of the Vermont legislature.

**Jennifer Ramstetter** is a biologist with a passion for rare plant conservation. A professor at (and graduate of) Marlboro College, she earned her Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts, with a dissertation on the dynamics of pollination and fertilization in two wild plant species, and did postdoctoral research on rare plants in France. Jenny recognizes that biology is only one of many pieces to the conservation 'puzzle.'

**Leif Richardson** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont, where he studies mutualisms between crop plants, pollinators and mycorrhizal fungi. He also works to address the causes and consequences of bee declines. He previously completed a PhD at Dartmouth College and served as State Lands Ecologist with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. He lives in Montpelier.

**Taylor Ricketts** is a professor of Environment and Natural Resources and Director of the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont. Integrating natural and social sciences to address both fundamental scientific issues and real-world conservation problems, his recent work focuses on the economic benefits provided to people by natural areas. He is a Senior Fellow at World Wildlife Fund, where he directed the Conservation Science Program for 9 years before moving to UVM.

**Chuck Ross** was appointed as the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets in January 2011 by Governor Peter Shumlin. Prior to his role as Secretary, he served for 16 years as the State Director U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy, 6 years as a state legislator from Hinesburg, VT. He resides in Hinesburg where he continues to help run the family farm with his brother and sister.

**Jane Sorensen** is passionate about pollinator habitat enhancement. She is a full-time farmer and co-owner of River Berry Farm, an organic fruit and vegetable farm in Fairfax, where she grows and sells native plants for pollinators. Jane teaches Landscape Design for Pollinators at UVM, gives talks on creating pollinator habitat, and is a retired landscape architect.

**Michael Willard**, President of the Vermont Beekeepers Association, owns and operates Green Mountain Bee Farm in Fairfax, producing honey, Vermont raised queens, nucleus colonies and health care products. He is interested in connecting rigorous interdisciplinary research with real-world conservation problems, with a recent focus on the economic benefits provided to people by forests, wetlands, reefs, and other natural areas.